

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) An oligonucleotide, which at least comprises, in a direction from the 5'-terminus to the 3'-terminus:

- (1) an antisense sequence of a target nucleic acid sequence;
- (2) a trimming sequence which is cleaved with base-specific RNase;
- (3) a sense sequence of a target nucleic acid sequence;
- (4) an antisense sequence of a promoter sequence;
- (5) a sequence that forms a loop; and
- (6) a sense sequence of a promoter sequence,

wherein the above-described antisense sequence and sense sequence of a promoter sequence form a double strand in a molecule via a hairpin structure, and when DNA is transcribed, a transcriptional product from the above-described antisense sequence and sense sequence of a target nucleic acid sequence forms a double strand in a molecule via the trimming sequence.

2. (Original) An oligonucleotide, which at least comprises, in a direction from the 5'-terminus to the 3'-terminus:

- (1) an antisense sequence of a target nucleic acid sequence;
- (2) a trimming sequence which is cleaved with base-specific RNase;
- (3) a sense sequence of a target nucleic acid sequence; and
- (4) an antisense sequence of a promoter sequence,

wherein, when DNA is transcribed, a transcriptional product from the above-described antisense sequence and sense sequence of a target nucleic acid sequence forms a double strand in a molecule via the trimming sequence.

3. (Original) The oligonucleotide according to claim 2 wherein at least a promoter sequence region is double-stranded.

4. (Original) A double-stranded DNA, which consists of the oligonucleotide of claim 2 and an oligonucleotide having a sequence complementary to said oligonucleotide.

5. (Currently Amended) The oligonucleotide according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~ which has two bases AA at the 5'-terminus located upstream of the antisense sequence of a target nucleic acid sequence.

6. (Currently Amended) The oligonucleotide according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 5~~ wherein the trimming sequence which is cleaved with RNase is represented by 5'-C(D)_kCD-3' wherein D represents A, T, or G, and k represents an integer between 0 and 100, wherein (k + 1) number of D bases may be identical to or different from one another.

7. (Currently Amended) The oligonucleotide according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ wherein the trimming sequence which is cleaved with RNase is represented by 5'-CTATGCT-3'.

8. (Currently Amended) The oligonucleotide according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 7~~ wherein -CCC- exists between the sense sequence of a target nucleic acid sequence described in (3) and the antisense sequence of a promoter sequence described in (4).

9. (Currently Amended) The oligonucleotide according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 8~~ wherein the promoter sequence is a T7 class III promoter sequence.

10. (Currently Amended) The oligonucleotide according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 9~~ wherein the sequence that forms a loop described in (5) is a sequence comprising -GNA- wherein N represents A, T, C, or G..

11. (Original) An oligonucleotide represented by 5'-AA-(the antisense sequence of a target nucleic acid sequence)-CTATGCT-(the sense sequence of a target nucleic acid sequence)-CCC-TATAGTGAGTCGTATTA-GCGAAGC-TAATACGACTCACTATA-3'.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for producing shRNA, which comprises transcribing DNA, using the oligonucleotide or DNA of claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 11~~ as a template and using RNA polymerase.

13. (Original) The method for producing shRNA according to claim 12 wherein the transcription is carried out *in vitro*.

14. (Currently Amended) The method for producing shRNA according to claim 12 ~~or 13~~ wherein T7 RNA polymerase is used as RNA polymerase.

15. (Currently Amended) shRNA produced by the method of claim 12 ~~any of claims 12 to 14~~.

16. (Currently Amended) A method for producing siRNA, which comprises treating the shRNA produced by the method of claim 12 ~~any of claims 12 to 14~~ with base-specific RNase.

17. (Currently Amended) A method for producing siRNA, which comprises transcribing DNA using the oligonucleotide of claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 14~~ as a template and using RNA polymerase, so as to produce shRNA, and then treating the shRNA with base-specific RNase.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for suppressing the expression of a gene containing a target nucleic acid sequence by RNAi, using the shRNA produced by the method of claim 12 ~~any of claims 12 to 14 or siRNA produced by the method of claim 16 or 17~~.

19. (Currently Amended) A reagent kit for carrying out the method of claim 12 ~~any of claims 12 to 14 and 16 to 18~~ which comprises RNA polymerase and base-specific RNase.

20. (New) A method for suppressing the expression of a gene containing a target nucleic acid sequence by RNAi, using the siRNA produced by the method of claim 16.